Final report:

Shasta River CRMP Coordinator, FY 1996

Cooperative Agreement # 14-48 0001-92513
96-pc-05

Abstract: The Shasta Valley Resources Conservation District formed the Shasta Valley Coordinated Resources Management and Planning Committee in 1991 in order to take a proactive approach to fishery and water quality issues in the Shasta River. Since that time the Shasta CRMP has acted as a semi-autonomous group, developing a watershed restoration plan, fostering studies, and encouraging participation in on-the-ground projects intended to reverse long-standing trends in water quality and fish survival. This report covers activities for FY 96.

Background:

The Shasta River Coordinated Resources Management and Planning group (CRMP) was started in mid-1991, through the combined efforts of several members of the ranching community, the Siskiyou RCD, and the Soil Conservation Service. At that time there was no similar organization in Siskiyou County, and the prospect of developing a good working relationship amongst the various potential participants seemed unlikely.

Given the magnitude of the task undertaken—to restore the productivity of the Shasta, while maintaining a healthy local agricultural economy—it was clear that efforts beyond what a volunteer group was capable of were required. Recognizing this, the Klamath River Basin Fishery Task Force provided funding in FY 1992 for a part time Projects Coordinator to assist the CRMP in progressing from discussion, education and planning to project implementation, grant funding and community outreach.

That funding has been renewed in FY 1993, 1995, 1996 and 1997.

Work completed:

Task 1—continue landowner contacts: Throughout the 12-month period covered by this grant, contacts with landowners were maintained in a variety of ways. Six newsletters (see attached sample) were produced and mailed to all landowners bordering the Shasta or its tributaries, along with other interested parties, providing basic information on meetings, topics under discussion, and projects worked on. Maintained operation of Shasta telephone accessible monitoring station for use by landowners in Shasta Valley and other interested parties. Most direct contact was concentrated on those individuals most interested in developing actual projects aimed at river improvements. Some of those projects will be discussed below. Additional contacts with other landowners were made via telephone, individual letters and direct contact.

Task 2 Prepare work plans and secure funding for restoration work: Task Force: USGS Gauging station

Grant, Task Force: CRMP Coordinator Grant, Cantara: Freeman Fence and Planting Grant, For the Sake of the Salmon: CRMP Coordinator Grant, Cantara: Riparian Photo, Interpretation and Inventory Grant.

Task 3 Provide oversight to assure quality of work done—oversight included the Himmel fence, Freeman Fence, Kuck fence, B&B Fiock Fence, Meamber tailwater systems

Task 4 Continue to document projects and progress—work included taking photos from defined photopoints on fenceline projects, installing test wells associated with tailwater infiltration pond, photographic documentation of work in progress on projects.

Task 5 Report Monthly to the CRMP-- CRMP meetings were not held every month, so monthly reports were not made. The Coordinator did attend and report at every CRMP meeting during the project period, a total of 8 meetings. He also worked directly with most of the CRMP members on an individual or sub-committee basis as needed.

Task 6. Complete/update the sub-basin plan—The Shasta CRMP finished its first sub-basin plan in 1992. That initial plan formed the foundation of an expanded plan, which was under development during the period of this grant. The expanded plan was projected to include:

1. CRMP recommended Riparian Zone and Anadromous Fish Action Plan
2. Calif. DFG produced Biological Needs Assessment for Shasta River
3. Shasta CRMP Uplands Management recommendations
4. Yreka Creek Greenway Committee plans for the urban sections of Yreka Creek
5. CRMP mid-term goals, proposed work plans, original CRMP Plan
6. Shasta River Remote Flow and Temperature Monitoring Station, flow-charts, historic flow and temperature information.
7. Sport, Tribal and Commercial salmon harvest numbers, Shasta and Klamath Rivers Spawner Numbers.
8. Shasta Valley Geology
9. Selected Annotated Bibliography

Work included frequent consultations and meetings with the DFG to assure adequacy and appropriateness of Biological Needs Assessment prepared under their signature, and the concurrent development of several sections of the Revised Plan. Release of the Plan was scheduled for the fall of 1997.

Task 7. Coordinate and assist other restoration efforts-- The projects coordinator made presentations to the Siskiyou and Shasta RCDs, worked directly with the office of education to improve its 319(h) programs, provided tours for the KFMC, met with representatives of Humbolt State University involved in developing GIS coverages of the Klamath Basin in order to provide input to improve the quality and utility of their products, met with and worked repeatedly by phone with Kier and Assoc. on the ongoing development of the KRIS, also provided data and photos for that effort. Assist in tour by board-members of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, made presentation at the Fall KFMC meeting, participated in changing DFG hatchery operations policy for spawning seasons, made report to the Siskiyou Co. sups,

meet with STEP re: restoration work.

Task 8 Prepare at least 2 funding applications to other than the Task Force—These included:
1. Freeman Fencing and Planting Project, submitted to the Cantara Trust Committee (successful; total project $76,031)
2. Riparian Inventory Proposal submitted to the Cantara Trust Committee (unsuccessful)
3. CRMP Coordinator Funding submitted to the For the Sake of the Salmon Committee (unsuccessful)

Task 9 Hold at least one public meeting for updating the community and for continued planning—Planned and arranged for a presentation and tour of the Shasta Valley for local landowners with hydrologist Sherman Swanson, U of Nevada, focusing on riparian condition and restoration. See attached itinerary.

Task 10 Prepare final report—This report:

Agreement 14-48-0001-92513 was originally funded starting in FY 1992. Funds actually became available in approximately April of that year. Funding was not available at the start of FY 1992 because of congressional difficulties passing a budget. Nearly all Task Force projects got a similarly late start. In the case of this grant, one outcome was that neither the proposed work nor the available funds were done by the end of the fiscal year.

Additional funding was sought for the next FY (1993), even though available funds would last through part of that year. Since the contract was still open at the end of FY 1992, and since the USFWS office in Yreka had carry-over funds, contract 14-48-0001-92513 was modified to include funding granted for FY 1993.

In FY 1994, it appeared that sufficient funds remained from the above two grants to allow a continuation of work without additional funding for the next year, so no grant funds were requested.

Funding was again successfully gotten through a grant from the USFWS in 1995 and 6, and in both instances the funding was added to the original existing agreement as a convenient means of dispersing carryover funds at the end of the fiscal years

The net result of the above was that four individual funding requests and subsequent individual grants over a five year period were incorporated into a single grant carrying the original number. The annual reports for each of those grants constituted the defacto final reports for each of them. This report is the final report for the last of those four grants. Further information and copies of reports on file can be obtained from the USFWS in Yreka. Grants covered can be identified as follows:

1992: 92-PC-06
1993: 93-PC-05
1995: 95-PC-05
1996: 96-PC-05

Matters of interest for FY 1996

During this time period, livestock control fences were constructed on the Himmel Ranch, the Freeman Ranch, the Kuck Ranch, and the Fiock Ranch. A tailwater pumpback system and final infiltration pond were constructed on the Meamber Ranch. All projects are working as designed, and the stream banks at these sites are beginning the recovery process. Tree planting will take place where appropriate during 1997, with cages around each tree to minimize beaver damage. Reports on each of these projects will be made as part of the reporting required for the funds received for them.

Discovery High School was solicited to assist with measuring stream cross sections on the Meamber Ranch. Seven students along with their teacher (Kevin Velarde) spent most of one day collecting profile data at 5 locations. Later they entered that data into a spreadsheet. The data collected will serve as baseline information along this section of the river, and will allow the documentation of changes occurring over time in the fenced area. Students gained experience working at multiple tasks as part of a team, collecting important field data on physical processes, and learned such fundamental things as fractions. Future cross section data collection will be done by other Discovery HS students annually at this site, and will be compared to this year's data to show changes taking place. Additional information can be found in the Siskiyou Office of Education 319(h) report.

The CRMP Coordinator worked extensively with Kier and Assoc. to fill out and expand the KRIS section on the Shasta River. Essentially all photographs used for the Shasta portion of the KRIS were supplied by the CRMP coordinator, all text was reviewed for content and accuracy, suggestions were made for additional material to include, documents were suggested or supplied for the bibliography, and problem areas were identified for correction. This assistance allowed the Shasta to be essentially completed, and serve as a template for other areas and other river basins.

The KRIS was initially envisioned as a tool for restoration planning and decision-making. During this year, it was still under development, and as such was able to provide little help in this area. A second factor is that nearly all of the material included in the Shasta section of KRIS either came from or is in the Shasta CRMP Coordinator's library and as such was already accessible to him. Much of this material was not readily accessible to other people, and should be of much greater use to them.

Landowner Interest in Shasta Restoration Process:

Little quantifiable change was observed in landowner interest during this period. Attendance at CRMP meetings was little different from the previous year. It appears as if most of the landowners who are easily convinced to help in the restoration process are aware of what is going on, and most have improvements planned or in place on their properties. Other landowners tend to try to avoid the whole process.

One noteworthy exception occurred when plans were released to use treated sewage for irrigation on a golf course to be built near Yreka. Landowners along Yreka Creek tried to solicit assistance form the CRMP in fighting the project on the grounds that it would reduce flows in Yreka Creek, impairing survival of salmon and steelhead. Only informal assistance was found to be appropriate in this instance.

It is also noteworthy that landowners in the Shasta Canyon continue to show a lack of interest in the work being done upstream of them.

We expect that additional landowner interest will surface over time, and as conditions change. Anticipated increased efforts to enforce the Clean Water Act, and the likely listing of Coho and Steelhead in the Klamath may also kindle new interest.

In more general terms, while the Shasta CRMP has only been in existence for five years, there seems to be a shift in attitude in the agricultural community from one in which the CRMP was viewed with extreme suspicion and distrust, to one where it is seen to be non-threatening, and at times even an ally. We feel that this is an important positive step which must precede the wider acceptance of restoration work.

Governmental participation in the Shasta CRMP

Agency interest in the Shasta CRMP varied. The Calif. DFG and the US NRCS consistently participated in meetings, planning, grant preparation and fostering the process. The BLM, while continuing to be supportive of the process in concept, seldom attended meetings. The USFWS maintained the highest level of interest, interacted frequently with the CRMP coordinator on a variety of issues, provided the only financial support received for the Coordinator, but attended meetings only sporadically. The state RWQCB readily provided information upon request, but had little other direct contact. Calif. DWR showed no interest in restoration matters, although personnel from their Red Bluff office were very helpful when asked.

Conclusions after Five years:

The Shasta CRMP was the first such organization in the entire Klamath Basin. Securing funding for a projects coordinator was a difficult task, and required a certain amount of faith and trust on the part of the Klamath River Basin Fishery Task Force. Fortunately, they recognized that the cost ($25,000) was low, and the need was great, and were able to approve funding.

The situation was not greatly different in the Shasta Valley. No similar organization existed anywhere in the county. The Shasta Valley Resources Conservation District had been looking into water issues, and had discovered that it was far too complex and politically hazardous for them to pursue. It appeared to them that a separate group should be formed to specialize in fishery issues, while the RCD pursued more general issues. They then asked members of the agricultural community, select governmental agencies, and the KRBFTF to join together to form the original CRMP steering committee. Each of them could then add their knowledge and expertise to tackling the difficult problems revolving around fish and water.

At the time the CRMP was formed, the prevailing opinion was that fisheries problems would "go away" if everyone would just hold out and wait. Individuals who participated in the CRMP or allowed restoration projects to be placed on their property were seen as turncoats to the agricultural community. Fortunately, some were willing to do what they felt was right despite local disapproval.

As time went on, it became increasingly clear that fishery problems would not go away. The Scott River

organized a CRMP of its own, taking advantage of the pioneering work in the Shasta Valley to broach the idea. A state listing as Threatened was narrowly averted for Fall Chinook in the Shasta River. Rumors of problems with Coho and Steelhead began to be heard.

Over time, the concept of local fishery restoration ceased to be quite the devil it was originally seen to be. One-on-one contacts, observations of the actions of neighbors, and news from elsewhere in the state and along the West Coast all served to change perceptions. Early successes served to boost morale.

As time went on, a growing list of projects in place required increasing amounts of time to manage. Reports had to be written, periodic inspections made, progress documented, meetings attended, projects overseen, and backsliding prevented. The level of funding that was more than adequate in the first years would no longer cover all the required work. Additional funding was sought from the Task Force, but increasing demands for Task Force funds made this decision difficult. Most other sources of grant funding balked at the idea of funding a coordinator position.

At the end of 1996, progress was slowing as a result of inadequate funding for the advance work that had to be done to bring additional landowners into the process. At present there does not appear to be a remedy for this problem. Future progress will suffer (but not halt) as a result.

Prior to the inception of the Shasta CRMP, the only fishery protection work done in the Shasta Valley was the installation of a limited number of fish screens by the DFG, and some minor restoration work on Yreka Creek. By the end of 1996, five miles of stream were fenced to exclude livestock, cattle were additionally excluded from the 6 miles of Shasta Canyon, and tens of thousands of willow whips had been planted. Over one thousand school children had engaged in some form of field work aimed at fishery restoration in the Shasta Valley, a riparian nursery had been established, teachers had committed to suing their students on long term monitoring projects, a dam on the river had been removed, and new fish screens were in the works. Agricultural users of river water voluntarily relinquished their water to create pulsed flows, and irrigation tailwater recovery systems were being built.

Things that seemed impossibly distant in 1990 were well underway in 1996.

That progress continues.